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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002769

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FOR ISN/NESS

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TAGS: [TPHY](#) [SENV](#) [TRGY](#) [TSPL](#) [PARM](#) [ENRG](#) [KGIT](#) [KNNP](#) [KSCA](#)
OSCI
SUBJECT: IRAQ MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SEEKING
IMPROVED INTER-MINISTRY COOPERATION

Classified By: Classified By: Economic Counselor Todd P. Schwartz
for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

Summary

¶1. (C) Minister of Science and Technology (MOST) Ra'id Fahmi Jahid told EMBOFFs on 25 August that one of the Government of Iraq's biggest problems is that the Ministries have no effective mechanism to coordinate their strategies. Fahmi said he thus requested the UNCTAD science, technology, and innovation policies (STIP) review in order to inform other Ministries of the importance of science and technology to Iraq's economic development. "The process is more important to me than the result," Fahmi said. He will use his trip to Geneva for the September 1 signing of the MOU to press UNCTAD to begin the review process as soon as possible, hopefully to be completed "in about a year." Fahmi said he is planning to restructure the Ministry in order to focus on several "big issues," such as pollution, renewable energy, advanced materials, and natural disaster mitigation and response. Physically rebuilding Iraq's research laboratories is his "number one priority," while also noting that the Ministry's two biggest problems are its lack of cooperation with provincial governments and the need for "capacity building" of its researchers, suggesting Iraqi scientist visitor programs to advanced labs as a partial cure for the latter. Dr. Adnan Jarries, Manager of MOST's Iraq Decommissioning Program (IDP), said phase one, periphery clean up, of the four-phase plan to clean up the LAMA facility at the Tuwaitha nuclear complex is ongoing and should be complete by the end of 2008.

¶2. (U) Participant list:

Iraq:

- Ra'id Fahmi Jahid -- Minister of Science and Technology
- Dr. Faoud Shati -- Deputy Minister
- Dr. Samir Raouf -- Deputy Minister
- Dr. Kudair Abass Dawood, Director General, Water Treatment Technology
- Adnan Jarries -- Program Manager, Iraq Decommissioning Program
- Dr. Thamer Hadi - Acting Director General, Directorate of Hazardous Materials & Environmental Research
- Mohammed Jawad Al Shara - Director General, Iraqi National Monitoring Directorate

United States Embassy:

- Dr. Paul Savello -- ITAO Senior Advisor
- Roy Therrien -- ESTH
- Daniel Markley -- DOE

No More "Island Ministries"

¶3. (U) Minister of Science and Technology (MOST) Ra'id Fahmi Jahid told EmbOffs on 25 August that one of the Government of Iraq's (GoI) biggest problems is that the Ministries have no effective mechanism to coordinate their strategies. Fahmi said he thus requested the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) science, technology, and innovation policies (STIP) review in order to inform other Ministries of the importance of science and technology to Iraq's economic development. "The process is more important to me than the result," Fahmi said. He hopes that the UNCTAD STIP advisors, through their discussions with various Iraq Ministries and agencies, will help convince the GoI of the importance of a "common vision," with enhanced focus on the potential role of MOST. Fahmi said that during his trip to Geneva for the September 1 signing of the MOU, he will press UNCTAD to begin the review process as soon as possible, hopefully to be completed "in about a year." (Note: Article III of the draft STIP MOU says that MOST and UNCTAD must then conclude a follow-on agreement which outlines their respective specific activities and responsibilities for the review, including costs and expenses. UNCTAD funding for the STIP review will come from the Iraq Trust Fund. End note.)

¶4. (U) MOST Deputy Minister Samir Raouf hopes the STIP MOU will help rid the GoI of its present "island Ministries" mentality as well as send a clear message to the world that Iraq is on the right path to integrate its science and technology strategy with national economic growth. The GoI needs to incorporate not only its Ministries, but also private enterprise in a holistic system for economic growth,

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he said. "This will take time, but it is a very important to show the international community that Iraq is headed in the right direction."

MOST Restructuring to Tackle "Big Issues"

¶5. (C) Fahmi called MOST's present structure of ten functionally-oriented Directorates "not sufficiently focused" for the issues facing Iraq. "Our present system is full of dispersion, waste, and redundancy," he said, and is thus undertaking an internal review to restructure the Ministry in order to focus on several "big issues," such as pollution, renewable energy, advanced materials, and natural disaster mitigation and response. Responsibility for these issues span several Ministries, he noted, further emphasizing the importance of enhanced inter-Ministry cooperation and synergy. Fahmi offered hopeful praise of new eGovernment and "eMinistry" projects as an element of his goal to enhance GoI coordination. "We have been changed with these new eGovernment and IT systems," he beamed, citing a newly formed national level committee to boost GoI eGovernment coordination.

¶6. (C) As a specific example of the Ministry's "big issue" strategy, Deputy Minister Shati described MOST efforts to support GoI disaster management with remote sensing applications. "We have had a MOST committee working for almost a year to determine our potential to contribute," he said, with emphasis on the importance of going beyond short-term "fire brigade" tactics. MOST has been trying to work with the Iraq Imagery Mapping Directorate (IMD) and Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), he said, and while IMD has been "open and helpful," the Directorates within the MoWR "do not even cooperate with each other, never mind us."

¶7. (C) In addition to restructuring, Minister Fahmi said physically rebuilding Iraq's research laboratories is MOST's "number one priority." Without elaboration, Fahmi then asserted that the Ministry's two biggest problems are its lack of cooperation with provincial governments and the need

for "capacity building" of its researchers, suggesting Iraqi scientist visitor programs to advanced labs as a partial remedy for the latter. (Comment: Their zeal notwithstanding, the Minister and Deputy Ministers' have thus far not been able to convey a practical vision to their Ministry. End comment.)

Update on the Tuwaitha Decommissioning Project

18. (U) Dr. Adnan Jarjies, Manager of MOST's Iraq Decommissioning Program (IDP), explained that phase one, periphery clean up, of the four-phase plan to clean up the Active Metallurgy Testing Laboratory (LAMA) at the Tuwaitha nuclear complex is ongoing and should be complete by the end of 2008. The remaining three phases are dismantlement of the LAMA building, the radioisotope handling "hot cells," and finally, the basement. Jarjies said the IDP must decommission ten destroyed nuclear facilities in Iraq, but chose to start with Tuwaitha's LAMA facility because it would involve the least amount of high-level waste, and therefore the best training opportunity for Iraqi decommissioning crews. (Note: The LAMA facility is a huge 62,000 square-meter facility. The hot cells have meter-thick concrete walls which housed robotic arms to manipulate irradiated material. The facility is reported to have completed only one experiment before being destroyed by coalition forces during the Gulf War in 1991, so the irradiation levels are quite low. Science magazine, July 11, 2008, p. 188.)
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